

GARY BEALS

Calle del Roble 10B 1° E 40002 Segovia España
 Tel. (921) 41 31 38 Móvil: (628) 50 64 00
segovia.gary@yahoo.com

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Shipwrecks with large cargos of coins Americas List

Potosí silver ingots produced this year:

The number of bar cast for many years was documented by authorities at the Potosí mint. The total per year serves to show the amount of cargo that needed to move from the 15,000 foot high city of Potosí down to the Pacific Ocean and then on to Spain. We have statistics on many years and provide them on this list.

The largest amount of silver ingots were produced in 1601 with 9,816 bars, The lowest number was 1501 bars in 1700. Each bar weighed about 75 pounds if the hundreds found on the Atocha wreck of 1622 are typical.

The 1500s —

- In 1520 the Spanish caravel *Buen Jesus* sunk during a hurricane off South Carolina. She carried six chests of gold dust and nuggets worth about 150,000 pesos.
- In 1537 a Spanish merchantman headed to Flanders from Bilbao was forced west by a storm and sunk near Cork, Ireland with the loss of all aboard and 27,000 gold coins.

In 1537, a year when French privateers captured nine treasure ships, Spain sent several royal warships all the way to the Caribbean to escort the treasure ships home. This convoy of merchant ships and warships is considered the first true treasure fleet.

- In 1541 two Spanish *nao* cargo ships with a total of 1,300,000 pesos of treasure disappeared during a hurricane within sight of the Dominican Republic.
- In 1543 a Portuguese slave ship sailed from the port of Santo Domingo in Hispanola (now Republica Dominicana and Haiti) with more than 500,000 pesos in treasure but wrecked on a reef 12 miles north of the island's coast. The 30 survivors made it back to land and reported seeing wreckage of the two ships that sunk in 1541.
- In 1545 the galleon *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* was overtaken by English privateer Francis Drake off Ecuador. In one of the most famous of pirate tales, Drake had sailed the *Golden Hind* into the Pacific and discovered at Callao that the *Concepción* — nicknamed the *Cacafuego* (Spanish for spit-fire, actually translated as poop-fire!) — had sailed for Panama a few days earlier with treasure aboard. He headed after her, full sail. The *Cacafuego* stopped as the *Golden Hind* came alongside, the Spanish crew having no idea that the British had arrived in the Pacific which until then was consider a Spanish lake. Drake took 13 chests of coins, 26 tons of silver bars, and a chest of gems. No crew members of the *Cacafuego* were harmed, in fact Drake gave everyone gifts!

- In 1549 three Spanish commercial ships sailing from Veracruz to Havana with 980,000 pesos in gold and silver were caught in a hurricane and were wrecked on south Key Largo. Most on board survived ashore for a few years until a passing ship rescued them.
- In 1550 the 120-ton galleon *Santa Maria de la Bella* with 1,000,000 pesos in gold and silver was headed to Spain when it wrecked on the western reefs of the island of Bermuda. Survivors were rescued four years later.
- In 1551 the captain of the 350-ton flagship of the *Tierra Firme* fleet with 2,500,000 pesos of treasure aboard reported a serious hull leak and deliberately sailed the vessel up on a reef on the west side of Bermuda. The ship came apart before any of the people or treasure could be saved. The 400-ton *Santa Barbola* also wrecked on a reef nearby but most of its crew and all of its gold and silver were saved.
- In 1553 a Nueva España fleet that left Veracruz for Havana was hit by a hurricane. Sunk were 18 ships, some being wrecked on Padre Island, Texas. The largest part of the 3,500,000 pesos total treasure has not been recovered. Two ships have been partially salvaged in recent years.
- In 1554 three Spanish galleons were driven onto sandbars off Padre Island, Texas. Some 250 died in the wreck and survivors later died of thirst and Indian arrows. A salvage operation from Veracruz far to the south sent four small ships to the site. More than 4,000,000 pesos in bullion were loaded on the salvage vessels but only one ship made it to Havana where it also sunk. Types of ingots and amounts of specific coins was not indicated.
- In 1559 the 300-ton galleon *Santa Maria de los Remedios* was sailing up the Bahamas Channel from Veracruz having by-passed Havana because of pirates in the area. She held 768,440 pesos in gold and silver plus exotic Asian items. A storm broke a mast and the ship's rudder leaving her drifting helplessly in the winds and north-flowing current. She fetched up on a reef near Great Bahama Bank. Survivors were able to get back to Cuba. No wreckage was ever found.
- In 1560 a hurricane caught the 400-ton galleon *Nuestra Señora de los Milagros* within sight of Bermuda and she sank in deep water on the south side of the island. Her cargo included 2,000,000 pesos in treasure and Asian luxury goods.

The Era of Manila Galleons

In the mid 1560s, a third Spanish fleet, called the Manila Galleons, began sailing between the Spanish colony of the Philippines and Acapulco on the west coast of New Spain. Those wrecks with large amounts of coins are noted in the Asia / Africa Shipwrecks List. Wrecks of Manila galleons returning to Mexico will not be listed here because they carry cargos of Asian spices and luxury goods, but not large amounts of coins.

- In 1563 the 250-ton galleon *La Madalena* was returning to Spain from Mexico when a storm wrecked the ship at Cape Canaveral. Only 16 of 300 aboard survived. She carried 50 tons of coins and bullion along with 1,000 pounds of gold and much other treasure. Spanish authorities were unable to find the wreck. In 1970 a shrimp boat's net snagged on a bronze cannon dated 1560 which may be from that ship.
- In 1563 five galleons carrying more than 3,000,000 pesos in treasure crashed onto the western reefs of Bermuda. Because of foul weather the rest of the fleet could not stop and 1,250 people died in the wrecks.

- In 1564 the 300-ton galleon *Santa Clara* with 1,217,000 pesos in treasure headed for Spain was pushed off course in a storm and wrecked on Little Bahama Bank. Contemporary salvors were unable to find the wreck.

- In about 1566 a small ship crashed on the shallow reef of Inés de Soto Island. It had an odd cargo of items that included India obsidian blades and lead fish net weights. But numismatically, the small cargo was spectacular: There were 53 rare Mexico mint 1536 three *reales* coins.

• **1568 The mint in Lima, Peru is established, but not initially used.**

- In 1571 the 300-ton galleon *San Ignacio* and the 340-ton *Santa Maria* sailed from Veracruz with more than 1,500,000 pesos in treasure as part of the Nueva España fleet. A hurricane hit the fleet in the Gulf of Mexico separating these galleons from the convoy which pressed on to Spain. They made it to Havana for repairs. They then traveled together up the Bahamas Channel and ran into another storm that further damaged both ships. South of Cape Canaveral the captains elected to run their ships aground to save lives and cargo. Unfortunately, the ships fetched up on a shoal about eight miles from the shore. There were no survivors.

Numismatic cargo: Mints in Mexico City, Lima and Potosí were all turning out cobs.
The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year was not documented

- In 1574 four unidentified galleons of the Nueva España fleet left Veracruz but were wrecked near Coatzacoalcos on Mexico's east coast with a total loss of 2,000,000 pesos in treasure and 1000 lives. The gold and silver was covered by drifting sands of the Caribbean Sea.
The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In 1577 the 400-ton Spanish commercial ship *Nuestra Señora de Loreto* had just loaded 2,200,000 pesos in gold and silver at Callao when the crew spotted a suspected pirate ship rushing into the port. In panic, the captain ordered the ship set afire to keep it out of pirate hands. A few minutes later as their ship burned the crew saw that the vessel that frightened them was another Spanish merchantman just in from Valparaíso.

The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In 1584 as a Nueva España fleet of 51 ships was sailing close to Bermuda a hurricane struck, sinking three galleons carrying a total of 3,500,000 pesos of treasure. Three commercial ships with unknown amounts of treasure were also lost on the western reefs.

The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In 1586 an earthquake hit the port of Callao causing three fully loaded galleons to capsize in huge waves. Thirty other ships also sank and 1200 people died. The warships carried a total of 6,700,000 pesos of treasure. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In 1588 the 280-ton *Santa Maria del Camino* left Nombre de Dios in Panama with 1,800,000 pesos in gold and silver. Later a hurricane drove the vessel onto the eastern coast of Florida. Indians killed many of the crew but some were left alive and rescued years later by Spaniards out of Havana. This was the year that Spain's hyper-catholic King Felipe II attacked England with a misguided "Invincible Armada" and was soundly defeated. More than 100 warships crashed on the coasts of Scotland and Ireland.

Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In 1589 a Spanish galleon with a large treasure from the Americas sank near Cornwall, England. Contemporary salvage crews recovered various tons of silver ingots and 23 chest of silver coins. The remainder disappeared into the sands of the seabed.
Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In the Fall of 1589, three Spanish fleets in Havana set sail together for Spain. Only a few out of more than 100 ships made it back to Spain. The 650-ton *Magdalena* carrying 1,250,000 pesos in treasure and no doubt even more in contraband went down just north of Miami, Florida. Only three out of 700 aboard survived. Other ships of this fleet sunk further north and 15 of the remaining ships sank in a hurricane near the Azores about 45 days later.

The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In 1595 the 350-ton galleon *San Pedro* with 500,000 pesos in treasure aboard wrecked on a Bermuda reef because of bad navigation. Part of this wreck was found in 1955 and a few million dollars worth of gold ingots and jewelry were recovered. The main treasure has not been found. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year was not documented.

- In 1599 a Spanish galleon loaded with 2,000,000 pesos in gold and silver fetched up on a shoal near Punta Pacamayo, Peru. Salvors found timbers on shore but presumed that the hull slid off the reef into deep water. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In 1599 four large galleons with nearly 12,000,000 pesos in treasure aboard were hit by a storm off Ecuador. Only two of the ship made it to Panama City. Bodies and timbers washed onto beaches but no gold or silver was found.

The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

27 wrecks

The 1600s —

- In 1610 the 250-ton galleon *Nuestra Señora de la Piedad* sailed from Calleo, Peru with 1,000,000 pesos in gold and silver for one of the ships of the Manila trade. She was six miles off Zacatula, Mexico when she capsized in a squall. She sank almost immediately in deep water. Only 32 of the 300 people aboard were rescued. This same year a 850-ton galleon on the same route sunk north of Trujillo, Peru with another 1,000,000 pesos of treasure lost.

The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known. In 1608 it was 6,628 bars.

- In 1610 the 45-ton small merchantman *Santa Maria* with 880,000 pesos in treasure was delayed in Peru when the Armada of the South Seas headed to Panama. A month later the captain chose to sail north alone against the advise of many. He encountered a pirate ship and ran his ship aground and set it on fire near Chiclayo. When pirates boarded the ship it exploded. Salvors found only 150,000 pesos worth of her gold and silver. The captain and ship owner were later hanged for sailing alone and losing the treasure that belonged to the king of Spain, the Catholic church and merchants.

The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known. In 1608 it was 6,628 bars.

- In 1611 as a treasure fleet in Veracruz port was preparing to sail for Spain, a powerful storm hit and wrecked four large galleons. Their cargos were scattered widely. Veracruz was a poorly situated port with little natural protection for vessels there. These wrecks are just an example of the price paid during the colonial period for this situation.

- In 1614 the 1250-ton Portuguese East Indiaman *Nossa Senhora da Esperanca* sailing from Lisbon with 375,000 crusados wrecked near Maceió, Brazil. TOO SMALL \$\$\$\$

The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- 1620s Silver becomes up to 95% of the value of cargo shipped from the Americas to Spain.

- In 1622 a hurricane in the Florida Keys hit a north-bound treasure fleet, sinking the *Nuestra Señora de Atocha* and the *Margarita* south of the Tortugas. These are the shallow water wrecks made famous by treasure hunter Mel Fisher and his crews in the 1970s and 1980s. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known. In 1629 it was 4,096 bars. List more of the lost fleet ?????

- In 1622 two smaller naos of the Nueva España fleet wrecked on Bermuda's western reefs. English residents recovered some treasure from one wreck but sand covered the other wreck quickly. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In 1623 the 254-ton galleon *La Candelaria* sailing with the *Tierra Firme* fleet with 765,000 pesos in treasure became separated from the other ships, stopped for repairs and on route to Havana was wrecked in a storm off Cozumel Island with few survivors. In recent years people fishing in the area have found several thousand silver Spanish colonial coins. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In 1623 during an attack by Netherland navy ships at Callao, five galleons were set on fire to keep the treasure of enemy hands. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year:

- In 1624 the 600-ton galleon *Espiritu Santo el Major* was part of a 40-ship *Tierra Firme* treasure fleet sailing up the Bahamas Channel. Near Cape Canaveral a storm hit the group and the ship vanished in deep water with a cargo of 2,200,000 pesos. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In 1628 privateers from the Netherlands captured an entire Spanish treasure fleet which had run aground in Matanzas Bay, Cuba. The Dutch could not fit all the plunder on their own ships so they refloated the five largest galleons to haul cargo. Sailing home the fleet ran into a storm and two 600-ton Spanish galleons became separated from the other ships and wrecked on shallow reefs near Freeport (now Lucaya) in the Bahama Islands. Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known. In 1629 it was 4,096 bars.

The Lima mint was closed from ____ to ____ so no coins from Peru's capital city should be expected to be found on any of the wrecks during that period.

- In 1634 the 560-ton galleon *Los Tres Reyes* loaded with 1,545,000 pesos in treasure had just landed in Cartagena from Porto Bello when it caught fire and exploded. All 324 men aboard were killed. No treasure was reported salvaged. A ship coming from Porto Bello would have carried silver and gold from Peru which had crossed Panama's isthmus by mule train. Potosí silver ingots produced this year was 4,098 bars.

- In 1641 A Nueva España fleet was hit by a storm while off the Florida coast. Five ships with a total of 2,350,000 pesos in treasure were wrecked a few miles north of St. Augustine, killing everyone on the vessels. Another seven ships sank in the high seas further east in the same hurricane with only 14 survivors being rescued. The lead ship of the fleet, the *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción*, had her masts torn off and she drifted for weeks before smashing onto the shoals north of Hispaniola, now the Dominican Republic and Haiti. All 450 aboard her died. In about 1680 American-born Sir William Phips salvaged most of the 1,500,000 pesos in her hull. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year was 3,796.

- In 1644 a Spanish treasure ship was reported wrecked on rocks nine miles out to sea on Bermuda's northwest side. Several other ships were said to have come to grief on these rocks. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year was 4,086.

- In 1647 the 640-ton galleon *San Nicolas* loaded with 2,000,000 pesos in gold and silver caught fire a few miles out of Arica and exploded, killing all aboard. Only four cannons and 16 chests of silver coins from Potosí were recovered.

The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known. In 1648 it was 5,312 bars.

- In 1654 four galleons of the Armada of the South Seas in Callao sailed for Panama with an estimated 3,000,000 pesos in stockpiled gold and silver. The *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción*, flagship of the group struck a reef near the mouth of the Guayaquil River in Ecuador. She broke apart quickly and most of the crew drowned. Salvors recovered about half the treasure and drifting sands buried the rest. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year was 4,012 bars.

- In 1656 the galleon *Nuestra Señora de las Maravillas* wrecked on the Little Bahama Bank. Her 5,000,000 pesos in treasure made her the second most valuable loss in the Americas. For 20 years after the sinking divers worked the wreck, recovering about 1,500,000 pesos of treasure. As was typical, drifting sands prevented salvors from gaining more. Salvor William Phips had a hand in this effort. This same year two galleons collided in the Bahamas Channel near Mimbres sending many silver bars crashing out of their hulls and sinking into the bottom of the sea.

The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year was 3,775 bars.

- In 1669 the 660-ton galleon *Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza* loaded with 3,250,000 pesos of treasure wrecked on the Little Bahama Bank in less than 30 feet of water. A companion ship was able to save only 63 of the 478 aboard. Salvors from Havana working the site in 1670 and 1671 found nothing of her except two anchors.

The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year was 2,685 bars.

- In 1673 the giant waves of an earthquake struck the port of Arica sinking two large galleons preparing to head north with more than 3,000,000 pesos in gold and silver aboard. All crew members were killed. Arica, now at the north edge of Chile, was the primary shipping port of Potosí gold and silver.

The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In 1678 a Netherlands cargo ship stopped at the deserted Ambergris Cay in the Bahamas. There the crew found the bones of 200 Spaniards, three tons of gold ingots, 43 tons of silver bars and 340,000 pesos in coins. They took the starving dog they found back to Holland.

Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known.

- In 1680 the Guadalquivir is no longer navigable and Cádiz becomes the key Indies port.

- In 1681 the Spanish galleon *Santa María de la Consolación* was being chased by the pirate Bartholomew Sharpe. The captain ran the ship aground on an island in Ecuador's Gulf of Guayaquil. Records indicate she was carrying 100,000 eight *reales* coins, a suspiciously small amount of coinage. Treasure hunters in 2001 recovered some 80,000 silver coins from the site. Specialists now think the ship held the typical 1,000,000 pesos to 2,000,000 pesos load of gold and silver.

The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known. In 1680 it was 2,583 bars.

- In 1683 the 700-ton galleon *Santissima Concepción* was hit by a hurricane and she was forced into a shoal about 11 miles from Cape Canaveral. Only five of the 500 on board survived. In addition to 1,800,000 pesos of treasure she carried chests of pearls and emeralds and luxury goods from Asia. Various attempts to find the wreck failed. Potosí silver ingots produced this year was 3,002 bars.

- In 1684 the 567-ton galleon *San Salvador* with more than 2,000,000 pesos had a serious hull leak and was attempting a landing when it wrecked on Bermuda's western reefs. The Spanish burned the ship and went ashore. Local English divers found a small part of the treasure before sand cover the wreckage. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year was 2,823 bars.
- In 1685 the galleon *San Jose* with more than 3,000,000 pesos in silver and gold wrecked near the entrance to the port of Paíta, Peru while being chased by pirates. The crew set the ship afire and it blew up just as the pirates were boarding her. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year was 2,458 bars.

The 1700s —

The famous pillar dollar 8 *reales* coins began being produced in 1732

The first wreck with a large quantity of those coins aboard would have been >>>>>>>

- In 1702 the galleon *Santa María de Teasanos* with 1,750,000 pesos in treasure plus Asian artifacts struck a submerged object about two miles from the port of Veracruz and sank quickly. Of the 390 people aboard only 47 could be saved. Most likely the ship carried both gold and silver from Mexican mines and luxury items brought to Acapulco by Manila galleons. The number of Potosí silver ingots produced this year is not known. In 1700 it was 1,501 bars.
- In 1708 the galleon *San Jose*, a fleet flagship or *capitana*, was sailing from Porto Bello to Spain with 11,000,000 pesos in treasure from Potosí. As she was approaching Cartagena, Columbia she was attacked by a squadron of British ships. Her powder magazine caught fire and she exploded and quickly sank in 2000 feet of water. Only a few of her 600-member crew survived. The huge load of treasure was half of the gold and silver stockpiled for six years in Panama during Spain's war of Succession. There were also emeralds aboard. This was the richest ship ever lost in the Americas, now worth about \$17,000,000,000 (yes, that is 17 billion) as of 2018. The wreck was located by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in November, 2015. Negotiations are underway regarding recovery operations.
- In July, 1715 a strong storm struck a 12-ship treasure fleet near St. Augustine. Eleven of the ships were sunk and modern salvage crews have only found six ship remains. The 471-ton galleon *Nuestra Señora de la Regla* went down with 3,000,000 pesos in registered treasure that has not been found. She carried custom-made jewelry for Spanish royalty. A crew of salvors set up a camp on shore shortly after the disaster and after several years recovered about a fourth of the silver. At one point pirates attacked this camp and took some of the recovered treasure.
- In 1725 the French war frigate *Le Chameau* sank off Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. Treasure hunters found it in 1965 but most of its load of gold and silver coins have not been discovered.
- In 1725 the galleon *Nuestra Señora de Belén* with more than 2,000,000 pesos in treasure wrecked near Campeche in the Gulf of Mexico. Some 400 lives were lost.
- In 1726 The Portuguese flagship *Santa Rosa* sank off the coast of Brazil with the largest load of gold ever lost in the Americas: 26 tons of gold coins and bullion. She caught fire south of Recife and exploded as people on shore watched helplessly. Six of the 700 men aboard survived.
- In 1733 a hurricane sunk a fleet of 22 galleons in the Florida Keys. Salvage work began immediately and more than double the treasure on the ships' manifests was recovered. This documents the typical enormous quantity of contraband gold and silver hidden aboard many

Spain-bound ships. Modern salvors have worked these wrecks with mixed results. Experts claim that lots of treasure remains to be found.

- In 1737 the 1400-ton Portuguese merchantman *Nossa Senhora da Assuncao* at Salvador, Brazil was preparing to sail to Lisbon with a fleet of 62 ships. She suddenly sank, probably from being overloaded. She carried 44 chests of gold coins and bullion. Later authorities found she had various tons of gold coins and bullion hidden under bales of cargo.

- In 1738 the *Princess Augusta*, a German ship taking 350 immigrants from Amsterdam to New York City wrecked at the entrance to Long Island Sound. She carried £2,000,000 in gold and silver coins for a bank in the city. Contaminated water on the ship killed 250 passengers and crew before it reached the coast.

- In 1741 the 640-ton galleon register ship the *Nuestra Señora del Buen Viaje* was carrying 375,000 pesos in gold and silver coins and bullion and headed for Spain. She was forced to run before a powerful storm for two days, losing her masts and rudder in the process. She crashed on Ambergris Cay one of the Turks and Caicos Islands of the Eastern Bahamas. Of the 330 people aboard, 240 survived. The captain and a few men took a long boat to Hispaniola to get help. Bureaucratic delays ensued and when a rescue ship made it to the cay more than two months later only bones of were found. None of the coins were recovered.

- In October, 1746 the worst earthquake since the arrival of the Spanish hit Peru. Three galleons loaded with treasure sank while they were anchored in the port of Callao. The *San Fermín*, a 30-cannon flagship sunk with 3,000,000 pesos of gold and silver. The two other ships sank with a total of 4,500,000 pesos in treasure. Another 20 merchant ships in port also went down. Little of the cargo was recovered.

- In August, 1750 a storm wrecked four Spanish treasure galleons on the coast of North Carolina. Immediately afterwards English and Spanish salvors recovered much of the treasure but experts say another 2,000,000 pesos worth is buried in deep in sand that stymied the contemporary salvors. This same hurricane pushed five other ships of this fleet further north. One reached Norfolk, Virginia. Three of the others sunk, their cargos unrecovered. The two surviving Spanish ships, the *Zumaca* and the *Guadalupe* sailed for Spain, but just hours into their voyage another hurricane hit and they sunk within sight of the shore, carrying more than 4,000,000 pesos in treasure to the bottom. This same storm sunk 12 English vessels, their cargos unknown.

- 1767 The Potosí mint strikes its first coins with a fly press
- 1773 The Potosí mint strikes its last hammered coin

- In 1752 five galleons with a total of 2,800,000 pesos in treasure sank in a storm off the Tabasco coast. Salvors recovered about one fourth of the treasure. In 1752 the Lima mint stopped production of hammered coins and in 1751 struck its first coins with a fly press, so this wreck might be the first to contain pillar dollar 8 *reales* coins. It may also have carried few if any silver ingots because Spain began to outlaw them.

The big bronze fly presses greatly improved speed, precision and uniformity of Spain's coins. With this technical advance came a little known order from the crown of Spain: No more shipping silver ingots! Make those bars into 8 *reales* coins — and cut way back on the number of smaller denomination pieces — much fewer 1, ½ 2 and 4- reales coins. Never mind the little shop on the corner, Spain wanted its big silver coins working in international commerce. This rule also meant Spanish colonial coins would be made in a more exacting way. Hubs were provided by the Madrid Mint so that mints from Mexico to Chile would create nearly identical coins. Only the dates, the mint marks and the initials of the _____ would differ.

Like all nations, Spain wanted the profit in coin making called seigniorage. Use slightly less metal than the face value of the coin, add copper for strength and there is money to be made in making money.

This bit of hidden history from Glenn Murray, a Californian who is the author of several books on Spanish and Colonial Spanish coins. Like m2, he also now lives in Segovia, Spain.

Q: Same with gold and doblones?

- In 1753 the 900-ton galleon *Nuestra Señora del Rosario* loaded with 800,000 pesos in gold and silver from Peru sank in the Plate river between Argentina and Uruguay. She was damaged in a storm off Cape Horn and was awaiting repairs.
- In 1757 the 1500-ton Portuguese merchantman *San Francisco Xavier* was found too leaky for the voyage from Salvador, Brazil to Lisbon. She was off-loaded, stripped and set afire. Then officials found out that merchants had hidden 43 boxes of gold coins and chests of diamonds under the ballast stones to avoid customs duties. The treasures sank with the ship.
- In 1758 the British warship HMS *Tilbury* sank off Cape Breton Island. As a pay ship it carried some £500,000 in gold and silver coins. The wreck was found in 1979 but Canada did not grant permission to salvage it.
- In May, 1761 a hurricane sunk five ships off Charleston, South Carolina. One of these was the British ship *Success* sailing from Jamaica to London. She had £1,000,000 in gold and silver coins aboard which the crew had recovered from a Spanish wreck in the Caribbean.
- In 1765 the galleon *Santiago el Grande* was headed to Spain from Havana but wrecked on the Great Bahamas Bank in 17 feet of water. She carried 2,000,000 pesos in treasure. Huge seas drove the ship onto the bank where it broke up and was covered by sand. In spite of a precise location noted, no one has located this wreck.
- In 1767 the 800-ton galleon *Nuestra Señora del Bien Viaje* with 400,000 pesos in gold coins and bullion aboard sank about two miles north of the port of Valparaíso, Chile. Only 89 of the 367 people aboard were saved. The treasure was lost in the sea.
- In 1769 the British warship HMS *Active* sunk near the entrance to the St. Lawrence River with more than £300,000 in silver coins on board.
- In 1770 the Spanish were sending some treasure from Peru south and around Cape Horn and on into the Atlantic to Spain. One ship attempting this dangerous route sank in a storm near Valparaíso, Chile. She was carrying the largest load of treasure to ever move in that direction: more than 4,000,000 pesos in gold and silver coins and bullion. Only a few of the 700 people aboard were saved and none of the treasure was recovered.
- In 1779 the 28-cannon British warship HMS *Hussar* struck rocks at Hell Gate and sank in the East River near New York City. As a pay ship for the English fleet she was loaded with £300,000 in silver coins. Other sources mention gold coins. It is possible that all treasure had been removed before she sank. In 1985 the New York Times reported that her wreck had been found. Being in a highly populated area, the wreck had salvage attempts in 1823 and 1880. One group in 1985 spent \$1,000,000 on the search, ending with the belief that the wreck is buried under tons of South Bronx shoreline land fill.
- In 1785 the 550-ton Spanish Merchantman *Nuestra Señora del Rosario* was sailing alone out of Veracruz with 1,500,000 pesos in treasure. Off Florida she was hit by a hurricane and driven

north. The ship being storm damaged, the captain choose to take her to Boston for repairs. She wrecked near Montauk Point and only 79 of the 254 aboard were saved. Coins from this sinking were found on beaches after major storms.

- In 1792 the 350-ton French merchantman *Le Grand Aanietl* sailed from Hispaniola for France with treasure that included 785,000 pesos in Spanish gold and silver coins. She stoved up on a reef on the west side of Bermuda and then slid off into deep ocean. Most on board survived but the ship was in waters too deep for 18th century salvors.
- In 1798 the Spanish frigate *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* left Honduras for Spain with 2,500,000 pesos in silver coins and bullion but struck a reef off the Yucatán. The treasure was only partly recovered.

The 1800s —

- In 1800 the British warship HMS *Lowestoffe* and eight commercial ships crashed into reefs off Great Inagua Island of the Bahamas. The warship was loaded with £400,000 worth of Spanish coins. None were ever reported as recovered.
- In July, 1801 more than 120 ship anchored in Nassau harbor were sunk by a huge hurricane. At the time the treasure and cargo lost was valued at £4,000,000. In 1961 a construction project discovered a shipwreck holding more than \$200,000 in gold and silver Spanish coins.
- In 1802 the Spanish warship *Juno* sailed from Veracruz with 300,000 pesos in treasure and 425 people. She sank off Cape May, Virginia, with total loss of treasure and lives. About 20 years ago a salvor claimed to had found and identified this wreck. The government of Spain was given ownership of the *Juno* in a court case.
- In 1804 the 670-ton Spanish merchantman *Santa Rosa* was lost on shoals near Wilmington, North Carolina. She has 1,000,000 pesos in gold and silver coins. Only 19 persons survived.
- In 1812 the 32-cannon British warship HMS *Southampton* was sailing from Jamaica to England with 68 chest of Spanish coins when she wrecked on a reef north of Conception Island in the Bahamas. Specialists said only about half of the coins have been recovered.
- In 1812 British warship HMS *Barbados* was lost off Nova Scotia's Sable Island with £500,000 in gold and silver coins and bullion.
- In 1813 a French merchantman *Tamerlane* was sailing back to France with 340,00 livres in Spanish gold and silver coin aboard. It was captured by an American privateer. While heading to New York, the ships wrecked on Cape Henry, Virginia and only a small amount of the treasure was saved.
- In 1815 the 1000-ton galleon *San Pedro Alcántara* lead a Spanish fleet to stop the revolution in Venezuela. She blew up while anchored off the coast. She carried 800,000 pesos in silver coins and divers at the time only recovered about half of that cargo.
- In 1822 the French ship *L'Americaine* sank off Nova Scotia's Sable Island with more than \$1,000,000 in coins and bullion.

With the independence of most of the new nations of South and Central America, the shipping of gold and silver coins to Spain ended.

Research statistics for this report is from the book *The World's Richest Wrecks: A Wreck Diver's Guide to Gold and Silver Treasures of the Seas* by Robert & Jenifer Marx.